

Art
of
Manipur



Nilima Roy

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THE BOOK

Weavers of Manipur appears to be magicians and produce what seemed like dreams. They have grasped the sensitivity to colour and by mere experience and training of their eyes, their expert hands apply range of suitable colours to produce magnificent colourful cloth. To Manipuri weavers colour is associated with seasons and festivals. The range of traditional designs among the Manipuri hand-woven textile have been known and admired for long time. The richness and delicacy of the textile patterns of Manipur have been highly commended and are a class by themselves. The designs and embroideries produced by them are delicate and extremely fine. Here one encounters with more intricate design, rich shades, but more orderly and regulated. While the local environment had a tremendous impact, the patronage of kings and religious heritage has always been a source of inspiration. Besides environmental influences, the Manipuri weavers evolved individual designs for their local costumes which has a range of multifarious colour combinations and attractive designs.

The present book is an excellent treatise on the technology of Manipuri handloom weaving with proper and adequate understanding of cultural ethos of Manipur as reflected in the weaving designs and patterns.



(Author with a Tankhul lady on way to Ukhrul)

Shy in nature but pioneer in her subject Smt. Nilima Roy, the author of this book, is one of the very few ladies who received her M.Sc. degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the University of Calcutta as early as 1945. She was attached to the Ethnological Museums in 1946 and worked as Curator of the Ethnography Section of the Indian Museum and then as the first Curator in the Central Museum of NEFA (Arunachal). At present she is the Keeper of the Department of Anthropology in the National Museum.

Keen interest in the subject gives her an impetus to travel extensively in different parts of India. She has not only enriched collections of enormous varieties of objects in different Museums; where she worked from time to time; but also prepared the complete documentations of each and every object.

During her tour abroad in connection with the Cultural Exchange Mission, she visited almost all the Ethnological Museums in Czechoslovakia, West Germany (Munich and W. Berlin) and Rome, and delivered lectures on Indian Ethnography, Tribal and Folk Arts and Crafts of India.

She has published a number of articles in different journals of India and abroad. Her publications comprise primarily of different aspects of Tribal life, there arts and crafts.

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ART OF MANIPUR



NILIMA ROY
M. Sc.

AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
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Forword

In the days gone by, in Manipur, parents looking out for daughter-in-law made sure that she knew weaving and embroidery. These were the much prized attainments in a girl. In our well-known epic of Khamba and Thoibi, the princess Thoibi in her exile in Kabaw competed with the princess of that place in weaving. In the fineness of weave and the matching of colours Thoibi easily beat her rival. It was not only in the valley that weaving was considered as the prized attainments in the fair sex : the many tribes that inhabit the surrounding held the same view. Cotton was grown plentifully in these hills, which was cleared and spun into threads and fabrics woven by loim weaving technique. The Marwari traders that followed the British introduced mill yarn to the valley weavers. They took to the mill yarn, while in the hills the old system remained.

Each tribe has their own design and colour combination. The colour pattern will indicate the tribe of the weaver. In the valley the Meiteis have their designs and each 'Salai'—T.C. Hodson used and popularised the word 'clan' as its equivalent; quite a number of scholars feel that the word "Lineage" is a better equivalent. Coming in contact with the various tribes the Meiteis have enriched their patterns, colour schemes of the tribal weaving. While in the hills even today much of the weaving is done by loim weaving technique, the valley weavers use the throw and fly shuttle looms.

Until chemical dyes was introduced into Manipur, the weavers used leaves, flowers, seeds, barks and roots of plants and trees besides earth. To get dark blue or black after dipping in a dye made from bark, the yarn was buried in mud to absorb iron. For beige and various shades of brown they grew a type of cotton which produced brown cotton.

To introduce Manipuri handloom products to foreign markets, the Government of Manipur created the Manipur State Arts & Crafts in the thirties under Mrs. E.M. Jolly, wife of the State Engineer and the companion of Maharani Dhanmanjuri Devi. This institution taught throw shuttle weaving to the hill girls. I still remember a piece of cloth woven by Thoibi Devi, who became a teacher, on which she had applied for a

job. It was about 16" by 14" and in English, the application read "Poor Thoibi prays for employment". It was done on the loom without any attachment. The workshop and showroom received a direct hit in one of the Japanese bombings of Imphal in 1942.

When a weaver was sent to some government weaving institution outside the State for training, she startled the teaching staff by weaving a fishing net by a very simple cross weaving technique perfected by our weavers many generations ago. "Leno Weaving" considered a difficult technique and comes last in the syllabus. To our weavers they had evolved a much easier technique and was intrigued by the involved time consuming technique being taught. Old 'Ningthoupee' the weaving technique used produced velvet type of cloth. There was pride and achievement was astonishing. Manipuri hand weaving made a name outside the State. A decade or so there were some two lakhs of looms operating in the valley. Hardly twenty thousand looms are in operation. The Government, Central and the State, have organised number of schemes and institutions to revive this industry. As the English saying goes, 'To kill the goose that lays the golden eggs', the middlemen which includes even the co-operative societies receives most of the profit and little goes to the weavers. They cannot make a living from handloom weaving and are seeking alternative trades. This is another story.

Shrimati Nilima Roy has taken great pains to get authentic information and she has been able to put in a number of illustrations of the various designs. Had there been more illustrations in colour, the reading public would have been able to see how well our weavers have selected and matched the various colours.

This work, I am sure, is an excellent treatise on the technology of Manipuri handloom weaving with proper and adequate understanding of cultural ethos of Manipur as reflected in the weaving designs and patterns. I hope this well written book, while documenting the weaving art, will be a good introduction of Manipur to the outside world.

M.K.P.B. Singh

Imphal

Preface

Many books have been published on Textile and also a few on Weaving. This particular one is the first in the series of weaving techniques and traditional textile designs of the North Eastern Frontiers of India. My interest in the process of Weaving designs of this area was stimulated during my Curatorial duties both in the Central Museum, Arunachal Pradesh, under Late Dr. Verrier Elwin and in the Ethnography Department of the Indian Museum at Calcutta. I got fascinated by the traditional textile techniques and indigenous motifs of this area and during my different visits to Manipur I got charmed not only with the weaving and indigenous motifs and colours of Manipur textile but also by the people.

In order to appreciate the beauty of the weaving and striking illustrations of motifs of the people of Manipur I started preliminary study of their total culture which revealed many things and threw light on the artistic life of the people of Manipur and their customs, religions, faith and their social history. In fact while studying of the traditional arts, I got the chance to know the inner life of the people of Manipur, the working of their aspirations and beliefs. To the people the weaving and use of different motifs does not only satisfy their domestic needs but have deep root into their mythology and religion.

It is the purpose of this book to place before the lovers of weaving art whatever little is left to write. This book is by no means an exhaustive one. This is just the beginning and I have tried to illustrate and document only a fringe from the tremendous amount of treasure available in this area.

I leave to the reader to judge the merit of this book, what I insist is that immediate documentation is necessary for such type of dying art all over our country. There is still facinating possibilities of investing and documenting these huge wealth of art vanishing rapidly. The study involve a vast amount of time and patience.

I was afforded the opportunity to stay and learn weaving techniques in Manipur through the generosity of my Meitei friends at Imphal and Tankhul friends of

Ukhrul. My deep appreciation goes to those weaver friends who took pains and devoted so much of their valuable time and efforts so generously to teach me the art of traditional weaving from the very preliminary step. My initial thanks are due to them all.

As I started writing this book it became increasingly apparent that every contact I had with my friends at Imphal, Ukhrul, Churachandpur, and Mao over and above my visits to the State Museum, Imphal, had been of invaluable assistance in the preparation and production of the final work. I wish I could give proper thanks to all of them individually.

I was fortunate to meet the Maharaj Kumar Priyobarta Singh, Ex-chief Minister of Manipur and at present Chairman, Manipur Spinning Mills Corporation Ltd., who very kindly went through my manuscript, his valuable suggestions from his personal experience helped me in modifying my manuscript. His foreword which he very kindly wrote for my book is a research work by itself. I am most grateful to him.

I am fortunate to be able to avail myself of the photographic skills of Shri Debatosh Sen Gupta and I am specially grateful to him.

Shri Berru Sen, Senior Photographer, Indian Museum, Calcutta, very kindly allowed me to publish one photograph from his collection and I heartily thank him.

The task of doing illustration fell to my friend Shri Dilip Bhattacharya and I thank him sincerely.

I am especially indebted to Shri Subal Singh, Curator, State Museum, Imphal, for let me examine and generously allowing me to photograph the textile treasures from his collection.

I would also like to record my appreciation and thanks to Dr. (Miss) Chhaya Bhattacharya for her untiring help in various stages of printing of this book.

It will be ungrateful on my part not to mention the name of Dr. Sachin Roy, whose encouraging words prompted this book.

The writing of this book required typing and retyping and in this Smt. Saroj Bala Khattar, Stenographer, has shown a degree of enthusiasm and co-operation.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to my Publisher, Shri Agam Prasad, unless otherwise of his persulation and interest this part would not have come out as separate book.

Nilima Roy

New Delhi
1 Feb. 1979

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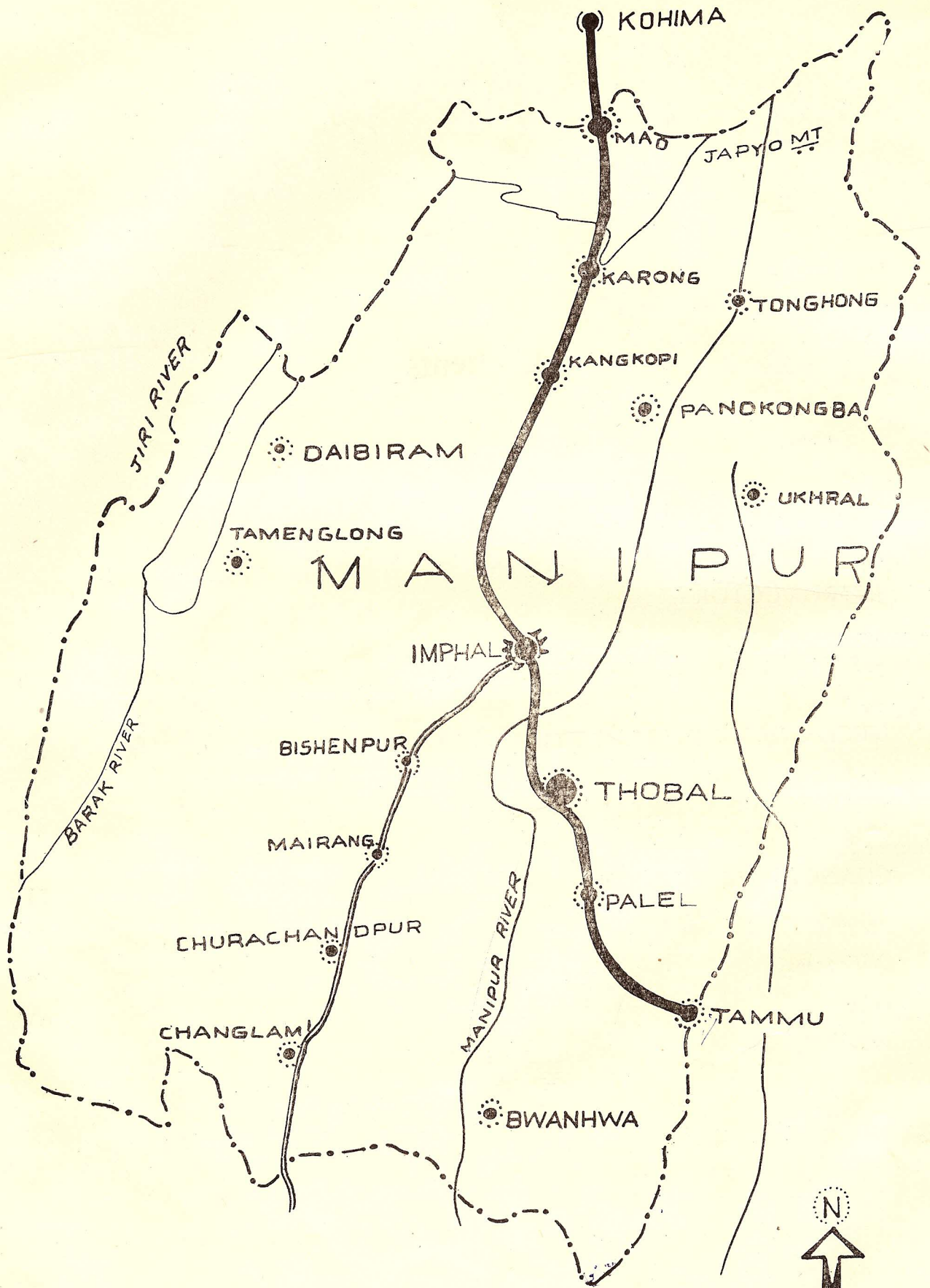
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MANIPUR

MANIPUR
NOT TO THE SCALE

INTRODUCTORY

The Oblong picturesque valley of Manipur spreading over an area of 22,356 km. is an isolated hill-grit State. This north-eastern State, surrounded by ranges of hills and described as 'Suvarnabhu' or the Land of gold, is one of the beauty spots of India. It extends from 93.03° to 94.78° East longitude and 23.83° to 25.68° North latitude. The land is bound by Nagaland on the north, by Burma on the east, partly by Mizoram and Chin hills of Burma on the south and on the west by Cachar district of Assam. The elevation of the central valley is about 785m. from MSL and that of the surrounding hills ranges from about 790m. to 3,000m. The climate of Manipur is healthy and salubrious. The rainfall varies from about 149cm. in the valley, to about 380cm. in the western hills. The temperature accordingly varies from 0°C to 40°C. The valley portion comprises a small area of about 2,360 sq. km. only, whereas, the remaining area of about 20,000 sq. km. is the hilly area. The cultivable area in the valley is full of clay and silt and thus proves that the whole valley area was once a lake and was gradually silted up by the streams and rivers from the hills. The hilly region are largely composed of pretartary slates and shales having lateritic soils in low hills and brown forest type in the higher regions.

Manipur was a princely State under the British rule in 1891. A democratic form of Government with Maharaja as the Executive head was established in 1947, under the Manipur Constitution Act. The territory became a full-fledged State with the integration on 21st January, 1972. The State, was a single district territory with 10 Sub-Divisions, was reorganised in 1969. The State now consists of six districts with District Head quarters at Imphal (Central District), Ukhrul (East District), Tamenlong (West District), Senapati (North District), Chandel (Tengnoupal District) and Churachandpur (South District). As against ten Sub-Divisions only, now the State has 25 Sub-Divisions.

The Census return of 1971 show a total population of 10,72,753, of which two-third of the population are concentrated in the valley of Imphal (1,00,366) where the

density of population is as high as 136 per sq. km. Though the hilly areas of the State cover more than 90% of the total geographical area, the total tribal population in that area is only 3,45,721. The density of population is as low as 19 per sq. km. only. Out of the total population of Manipur, the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes claim 3,34,466 and 16,376 souls respectively.

Agriculture is the main stay of the people. About 88% of the total working population in the hills and about 60% of the working population in the valley depend entirely on the agriculture and allied pursuits like animal husbandry, fisheries and forestry. This is possible because the soil of the valley is enriched by the deposit of alluvial clay from rivers, and the large number of hill streams ensure irrigation. The staple food is rice and the minor agricultural produces are tobacco, sugarcane, mustard, etc.

With a total population nearing 11 lakhs, Manipur has impressive number of educational institutions. At present Manipur has 3,337 primary schools, 343 middle schools, 223 high schools, 12 higher secondary schools and 22 colleges with a total number of 15,233 students on their rolls. On the total strength of educational institutions there are 1,926 primary schools, 169 middle schools, 67 high schools, 2 higher secondary schools and 3 colleges located in the hilly areas which occupy seven-eighths of the total areas of the State. Manipur with such rich academic base has a literacy percentage of 33% and is one of the highest in India.

Due to geographical isolation and inaccessibility, Manipur remained almost unaffected by political vicissitudes in the subcontinent. However, this did not affect the flow of Indian culture into this land. The culture of modern Manipur is undoubtedly a part of Indian culture but in this respect, Manipur has not been a blind imitator. She is not only a receiver, but a giver too. She has contributed to the totality of Indian culture. Their literature dates back to eighth century and contributes a significant part of Vaishnava literature in India.

In ancient times this land of jewels was known to its neighbouring people by different names. It was known as 'Mcklay' in Rennell's Memoir, in the Narrative of Symes as 'Cassy' to Burmese as 'Kathe'. The Ahoms used 'Makeli for Manipur, Kacharis as 'Maghli', and Assamese named it as 'Moglan'. The present name Manipur, as is evident from the old manuscript, became popular in the modern age. The present Manipur also known as 'Meitei Leipak' is the ancient land of Meiteis (Vaishnavite Hindus).

Imphal is the capital of this land locked State and has an area of 17.48 m. with 1,00,366 population and is about 785 m. above MSL.

Manipur is an area of composite race, formed out of several strains. Mongoloid

racess from Burma seem to have mixed with the Indo-Aryan Strains from India. In fact, Manipur is the place where different waves of races and culture met through the ages, which ultimately mingled together. The territory is divided into two distinct zones—the valley and the surrounding hill areas. The main population of the valley is the Manipuris, known as 'Meiteis'. They claim their descent from 'Pakhangba', who ruled Manipur and had the power of changing his shape into a serpent with a straight tail (Mamei Tigna). Their population as enumerated in the census of 1971 show 3,39,003 males and 3,39,382 females.

The surrounding hills are occupied by numerous tribes with all their heterogeneous and homogeneous elements. The 29 Mongoloid tribes inhabiting Manipur hills may broadly be divided into Nagas and Kukis (Belonging to Kuki-chin group).

It is not possible to make a clear-cut classification of the Naga group and the Kukis—the important Naga groups are Tangkhul (57,571), Kabuis (50,802) and Mao (19,346). The Zemeis, the Liangmei, the Maram, the Thangal, the Maring, the Anal, the Moyon, the Monsang and the Lamgang are also included under the Naga group.

The Kukis like the Thadou (44,097), the Paite (23,797), the Hmar (22,805), the Vaiphui or Waiphei (15,358) and the Aimol (14,078) along with the Chothe, the Chiru, the Koireng, the Simte and the Zou arrived in Manipur as late as 18th and 19th centuries A.D., on being unable to bear the burnt of the Lushai or Mizo raids.

The Meiteis, popularly known as Manipuris, are a separate group of people having their own entity. The name Meitei has been derived from the word 'me'—man and 'Thei'—separate. The history of the Meitei society, their customs, traditions, religious beliefs, art, culture and rich literature are laid down in their old manuscripts like 'Leithak Leikharol'. Other manuscripts like Poireiton Khunthok recorded their identification and origin. The Meiteis speak Manipuri language which is in Kuki-chin group under Assam-Burmese Branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. They are divided into seven endogamous groups locally known as 'Salai' which is believed to have come out of different parts of Kuru's (Almighty) body. The general characteristics of Meiteis are of Mongoloid type with small eyes, fair complexion, rudimentary beards, etc. There is, however, also a diversity of features which accounts for admixture due to foreign invasion. Generally, they are thin built with well developed limbs. The men among them do not exceed 5'7" in height and women on an average about 4" shorter than their counterparts.

The Meitei Society is patrilineal though the women bear the major yoke of labour. Women share the responsibilities of earning and are not confined only to household duties. The household is a true social unit and the head of the family has to



Fig. 1—Manipuri bamboo basket for keeping textiles.

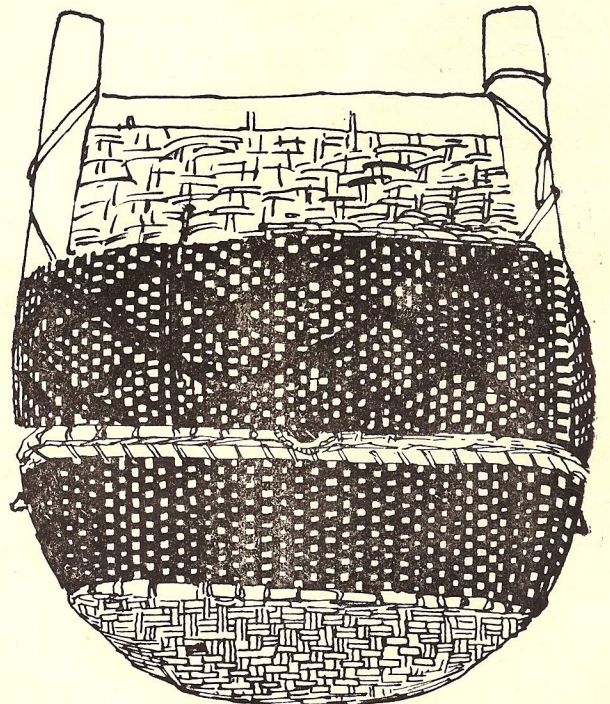


Fig. 2—Backview of figure 1.

perform certain religious duties. Their families consist of man, his wife and unmarried children. They practice both types of marriage by engagement and elopment. In the engagement type the father of the boy provides the expenses. After the marriage the boy with his wife settles in the village in a separate house. The youngest son, however, remains in the father's house and inherits his house. The rest of the property is shared by all the sons. They may marry from any place not necessarily within the village but stick to gotra-exogamy. The violation of gotra-exogamy is not favoured and is almost a taboo. Though monogamy is the usual rule, there being more women than men, the practise of polygamy is also not uncommon.

By nature they are lovers of flowers with which they bedeck themselves beautifully. Their dresses are simple but tasteful. The woman wears coloured long stripped skirt, blouse and white chaddar gracefully and the man uses white dhoti and chaddar and in ceremonial occasions a Pagri.

Meiteis have inherent love of performing art with lyrical beauty and rhythm. Their rich culture and tradition are also reflected in their handloom, tasteful clothes and in finer workmanship of handicrafts. Weaving among them is a traditional art of the women and finds an easy market. They are deeply sensitive and their unique pattern of life with inherent love of art is reflected in their dance and music. Their dances, whether folk or classical or modern, are devotional in nature.

Meiteis rarely perform any festival which is not accompanied by dance, music and song. Their Lai Haraoba festival is a very interesting dance drama led by priests (Maibas) and priestesses (Maibis) depicting the creation of life. It is celebrated during March-April for about 10 to 15 days before the village temples of gods and goddesses and the entire village participates in it. This festival of merry making of gods and goddesses is an example of the pre-vashnavite culture among them. The tandava and lasya aspects of the dance in the Lai Haraoba festival is presented in the Khamba (incarnation of Lord Shiva), Thoibi (incarnation of Parvati) dance with picturesque dresses having restrained and delicate movements.

Holi is one of the most important festivals of Meiteis and is performed on the Vasant Purnima day associated with the birth of Lord Chaitanya of Bengal. During the Holi festival young and all come out accompanied by the groups of musicians and go in procession to the temples, with sprinkling of coloured water to each other. During this festival boys and girls participate in the Thabal Chouba dance (jumping in the moonlight).

Collective devotional singing (Sankirtana cholom) with cymbals in hand, having series of body movements, accompanied by Mridanga (drum) is another very popular

musical festival of Meiteis all over Manipur. The body movements of the musicians and singers with cymbals start with slow movement and gradually reaches to the most exciting feats. The male dancers with white turbans and dhoti sing melodiously with the rhythm of the Sanskrit slokas or Vashnava padabalis.

Pung cholom or Kartal cholom is a part of Sankirtana cholom and is a group performance of males. The drummers, clad in dhoti and turbans start this dance with soft and graceful body movement with the rhythms of drums and cymbals and as they gradually gather the momentum they perform exciting feats along with their drums.

“The Rasa Lila, the epitome of Manipuri classical dance is woven through the celestial and eternal love of Radha and Krishna as has been described in Hindu scriptures and reveals and sublime and transcendental love of Krishna and Radha and Gopis’ devotion to the Lord”. This seasonal dance-drama, and in strict classical dance style, is performed in the enclosure of the temple during Vasant Purnima, Sarat Purnima and Kartika purnima. The dance movements of the participants are graceful and highly stylised. The exquisite richness of the costumes of the dancers adds to the beauty of the dance.

As has been noted earlier, 90% of the total geographical area of Manipur is hilly area and is inhabited by different tribes who are mostly Mongoloid with variations in their height, built and complexion.

The two major groups, the Nagas and the Kukis, differ in their village organization. The Nagas have their democratic village organization whereas the Kukis are organised around chieftainship. Apparently the cluster of tribes in the hills give a homogeneous picture but the ethnic scatter is not very much hidden where Mizos, Kukis and Nagas are the main ethnic identities.

With Jhuming or shifting cultivation as the principal mode of living the majority of the tribes of Manipur engage themselves in horticulture and agriculture. Except for the foothill dwellers who practice wet rice cultivation, the use of plough is not to be found in the hill area. Hoe, digging stick and dao find an important place in the economy of the hill tribes of Manipur.

The importance of these tools is highlighted because they are locally manufactured. It is estimated that about 3 lakhs of tribes men practice cultivation on about 60,000 hectares of land. The ownership of the land lies with the community. The individuals also own the land but generally the village headman allots the land for cultivation.

The art of weaving is a highly developed art of this region and women are the only occupants of this profession.

The Kabuis inhabit the mountain ranges of the Tamenlong Sub-Division of

Manipur and adjacent mountainous areas in Nagaland and Assam. They are one of the major Scheduled Tribes of Manipur and are enumerated in the Census of 1971 as 24,699 males and 26,103 females. They have Mongoloid features and do not differ widely from other Mongoloid communities of Manipur. They are linguistically in the Naga group of the Assam-Burmese Branch of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. They do not have written script of their own but use Bengali script. The traditional dress of the Kabui men is a short dhoti (Khudei). The women wear a piece of cloth of thick texture (Pheiso) and put on over the breast. The colour for ordinary wear is not very bright but their traditional costume (Gan-Ngai) woven by themselves at the loom are very colourful. The predominant colours are black, red and blue. The Kabuis are divided into number of exogamous clans. Marriage inside the clan is prohibited and so also among parallel cousins. They generally practice monogamy and there are two methods of acquiring mates—negotiation and by elopment. The Kabuis have a rich tradition of music and dances. The different artistic movement in their dance is accompanied by music. Among them the boys and girls come out for their dances in their traditional colourful costumes (Major-khul). The movements are abstract and assume geometrical patterns and are usually performed in circles, with the boys holding daos (swords) and wearing exquisite dresses and girls dancing in their best possible costumes.

The Tangkhul Nagas inhabit a compact area of the eastern zone of Manipur, extending from Tengnoupal right upto Somra Tract (now in Burma) in the north. They have all the Mongoloid traits with variation in skin colour. Linguistically they come under the Naga group of the Tibeto-Burman family. The Tangkhuls are one of the major tribes in Manipur and they number 28,574 males and 28,997 females as enumerated in the Census of India, 1971.

Among Tangkhuls the smallest social unit is the family. Their society is Patrilineal and the essential feature is that its members are descended from the eldest male resident in the house. The mother, under the rule of exogamy, is from another clan. The structure of the family is breached by the marriage of its members. Both married girls and boys set up their own establishment. Their villages are a distinct unit of political and economic importance. Marriages are mostly arranged by the young people themselves, but arranged marriages are also common. Tangkhuls discourage their girls from marrying with men of village where weaving is not practised. Among the Tangkhuls the marriage price is dependant on the wealth of the parents of the girl. Polygamy is permitted among them. Men among them dress in a simple cloth worn round the waist and after tying a knot in the front, the ends are allowed to hang down. Women among them wear very colourful skirts with colourful stripe designs. Five major festivals associated with

the sowing and harvesting are performed and the boys and girls sing and dance during these festivals with spears in slow movement but without any percussion instruments.

The important sections of Kukis like Hmar, Paite migrated along with their other sections from the Mizo Hills and Burma to Manipur area. The different sections of the Kukis resemble each other and their total population in Manipur area is 1,20,135 (1971). They are short, sturdy and have all the Mongoloid characteristics present in their features. But their skin colour varies from dark yellow-brown to yellow-olive. Though they prefer to settle in the hilly regions but in Manipur they are found almost everywhere in the State. There is not much difference in dress with the Meiteis. The Kukis have no restriction of marrying in a particular family or clan, a Kuki is allowed to marry any woman he chooses except for his near kin. But there is a certain amount of prejudice in marrying the first cousins on the father's side. Social units of the Kuki society are of biological family consisting of a man, his wife and the unmarried children born of their union. The residence is patrilocal but like the Meiteis the youngest son usually inherits the household property. This is because the youngest son or the only son is supposed to look after his parents even after his marriage and usually do not build a separate house. But married daughters leave their father's household and join their husbands.

Hmars are divided into several clans. Their dress is very simple but with the gradual contact with the outside world, considerable changes in dress have taken place. Linguistically the Hmars are Kuki-Chin group of Assam-Burmese Branch of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. Their main concentration to Chura Chandpur area and specially in Rengkai village about 40 miles from Manipur.

Hmars have the same type of families, as the Meiteis. Among them only the youngest son has the undisputed right over the property of his father. Hmars recognise at least four different methods of acquiring a wife, viz., (i) by service ; (ii) by intrusion ; (iii) by elopment ; and (iv) by arrangement. But marriage by arrangement is the general practice and marriage by elopment is resorted to due to economical reason or when parents do not like the match. In the arranged marriage the boy's household has to pay bride-price which varies from one clan to the other. Neither sorarate nor lavirate is compulsory but is still practised.

Paites belong to the same group and family of Hmars linguistically. They are mainly found in Bungmil village of Chura Chandpur. In their dress and habitation they resemble more of the Mizos than the Kukis.

As regards marriage the Paites are monogamists. The marriage of paternal first



1. Tangkhul village at Ukhrul.



2. Preparation of Rash dance costume.



3. Meitei girl in traditional dress.



4. Traditional Tangkhul dress.

cousins are allowed. Marriage among them is by arrangement. Like their neighbours the eldest son inherits.

The residential pattern of the villages of all communities are not laid out in any systematic manner. The houses are not scattered around but are usually found in a cluster. Most of the villages are not self-sufficient so far as the supply of materials for the construction of the houses are concerned. The villagers go out to distant areas or other villages for wood, bamboo and thatching materials, when these are not in plenty in their own area. The structural style of the house remains practically the same all over the area. The shape of house is almost always rectangular while the frontal part of the house used for sitting or weaving is either an extension in the lengthwise or specially constructed in extension of the side of the house. In most of the villages the residential houses are constructed in such a way so as to leave some open space in the front. During fair weather this open space is utilized for weaving, drying of clothes and fuel, etc. The construction of a house among these people is not an individual affair. The owner of the house is helped in the construction by his relatives and friends, who in turn are provided with food and drink. The common ceremony attached to the completion of the construction of a new house is a feast offered by the owner to his relatives, friends and others who helped him in the construction.

Major Kuki tribes, inhabiting the Southern hill ranges of Manipur, have beautiful dance forms normally performed by a male and a female. They have mouth organs, slightly resembling bag-pipe (*gosem*), made of gourd and seven bamboo reeds of different lengths.



Agam Kala Prakashan Delhi

